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**PRESS ADVISORY**

No. 302-P  
November 29, 1994

Secretary of Defense William J. Perry will be presented with the National Military Family Association's 1994 Support to Military Families Award at the organization's annual luncheon meeting on Wednesday, November 30, 1994, at the Sheraton National Hotel, Arlington, Virginia.

General John M. Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is scheduled to be the event's guest speaker. Over 175 active duty, retired military, and corporate members are expected to attend.

Media interested in covering the event may contact:

Joan Asboth, Chairman's Public Affairs Office, at (703) 697-4272

George Lawton, director, Public Relations, The National  
Military Family Association, at (703) 823-6632

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SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY  
REMARKS TO THE NATIONAL MILITARY FAMILY ASSOCIATION UPON RECEIVING THE  
ASSOCIATION'S 1994 SUPPORT TO MILITARY FAMILIES AWARD  
ARLINGTON, VA  
NOVEMBER 30, 1994

Secretary Perry: I really appreciate this honor. It's really nice to be rewarded for doing something that you know in your head and in your heart is the right thing to do. The recognition by your group which has done so much for military families is especially meaningful to me.

I do want to say to the extent any credit is due.. I want to share that credit with a very important member of my family, my wife. (Applause) Everything I do, I do better because of her love, her support and her partnership. But beyond that, she has taken a great personal interest in the quality of life of the men and women in uniform and their families. Any time I go to a base I'll sit down and talk with senior enlisted persons to get their perspective. Lee often travels with me and goes off on her own (inaudible). In effect, she provides an extra pair of eyes, ears and legs to help me get some insight into what the real problems are. You might say that we're kind of a quality of life tag team. (Laughter and applause)

I would also like to take this opportunity to (inaudible) my daughter's here today. (Applause) Actually in her own right, she (inaudible) military lifestyle.

My most important task since the day that I was sworn in as Secretary of Defense has been to maintain the high quality and high morale of our men and women in uniform. No armed force, no national security strategy, no tactics [we offer], no weapon system is better than the people behind them. Maintaining the quality force that we already have today is the greatest challenge which I have.

But I did receive a legacy -- a legacy of high quality forces, high morale forces. I intend to pass that same legacy on to my successor.

The Defense Department (inaudible) quality of life for two very important reasons. First of all because it's the smart thing to do. It helps us recruit and retain the best people And it allows our forces to deploy, assured that their families will be taken care of. Beyond that, it's the right thing to do. America has the world's greatest armed forces. They have given a great deal to our nation and we owe them a fair deal in return.

Service families should not be on a nine-month waiting list for child care centers. They should not be forced to live off base (inaudible). They should not have to worry about (inaudible) commissary (inaudible). In the first place, nobody joins the military expecting to appear on Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous, but neither do they expect to take a vow of poverty. We ought to do right by our forces, and we will.

Because of the quality of our forces, our nation will celebrate the upcoming [holiday season] blessed with peace and security. (Inaudible) and to share our blessings.

As we enjoy the holiday cheer, let us send our prayers to those who gave their lives to keep our peace and our security, and our love and blessings to the forces who will be away from home during the holidays.

Thank you very much.

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